

It is our opinion that the members of the Board of Supervisors have only a casual knowledge of what is taking place in these matters here discussed, because that group of five men are responsible for a county with income and expenditures almost as large as those of the U. S. Steel Corporation, and they must necessarily depend upon their subordinates for proper administration. Somewhere, then, in all this, it is possible that there exists a case of "Bureaucracy Going Wild."

Because of the menace to the interests of the indigent sick, to the public, and to the medical profession, the offenses complained of should at once be stopped. And last, but not least, the county hospitals of California should be administered with due regard to the laws of the State, which in all this seem to be flagrantly disregarded. So much, on this vexed subject, for the present.

PLEA FOR THE PRESERVATION AND COMPILATION OF MEDICAL ARCHIVES OF COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETIES

Lure of Medical History: William Watt Kerr, Joseph P. Widney, Philip Mills Jones.—Were you among those who read Dr. Herbert C. Moffitt's delightful sketch of one of the former guiding spirits in California medicine—the late William Watt Kerr of San Francisco? If not, you do yourself an injustice if you do not take the time and peruse it, and so enjoy the portrayal of the life of a physician whose professional work went far, in his time, in maintaining high standards of practice in our State. In addition, you will find that the article contains other interesting medical information of days gone by, which Doctor Moffitt outlines in charming style. Our medical forbears, even of so recent a period as scarcely half a century ago, loved their profession and guild with an intensity worthy of emulation by present-day disciples. Their controversies and battles, of interest even yet, were not the least of the many absorbing stories that might well find proper place in a chronicle of their periods. Doctor Moffitt's paper appeared on page 27 of the January issue.

On page 4 of the same number reference was made to Dr. Joseph Pomeroy Widney, motivating leader in the group of physicians who, on January 31, 1871, founded the Los Angeles County Medical Association, at a time when that present-day metropolis was little more than a small Mexican town. Today's members of that county society, one of the largest component county societies in the United States, may well be proud of their history, and also of their founder, who celebrated his ninety-sixth birthday on December 26, 1937, and, in spite of the heavy handicap of blindness, continues his work both as a student and scholarly author. It will probably never come to pass again, for anyone to record in the medical annals of California, that it fell to the lot of one of its physicians not only to have witnessed the great changes which have been created in the last seventy-five years in the Golden State, but also, at the same time, to

have been intimately associated with, and to have had far-reaching influence in a host of civic, educational and medical endeavors that came to the front, as one decade succeeded another. Founder Widney's life has been so rich and full of service that every member of the California Medical Association may take pardonable pride in his career.

In the January issue, also, appeared a brief survey of the founder-editor of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL of the California Medical Association—the late Philip Mills Jones.* What a magnificent work he also accomplished, in his comparatively short life! Keep in mind that, in a few brief years, with a state medical journal in its swaddling clothes, and on a precarious financial foundation, his pen gave expression to views on medical journalism and ethics which the medical press of the United States, in decency and self-respect, found it could do nothing else than to adopt, thereby removing from the pages of their magazines a mass of proprietary and other advertising of unscientific products, even though at a loss of thousands of dollars to their incomes. But to Editor Jones, militant and courageous, in the righteous battle, all who transgressed were alike a foe. For that splendid service, both national and state medical societies may well be grateful to California.

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Every County Medical Society Should Appoint a Committee on History, to Take Up This Work.—It is true, that only a few physicians can attain the heights reached by the men above mentioned, but the spirit of pioneers and leaders, such as the late Doctors Kerr and Jones, and our still living Doctor Widney, can be and is made part of the life of every physician who meets his professional and civic responsibilities in manner as earnest and fine as that with which these pioneers took up the consideration of each day's problems. As a matter of fact, there is not a county in this great state in which, if search were properly made, there could not be found the records of medical men who, in like fashion, have gone forth to each day's labors with outlook, both broad and gentle, dedicated to devoted service for their fellow men and patients, and to the communities in which they practiced their profession.

It is to this group of physicians, practically unknown in the sparse medical records of days gone by, as possessed by the California Medical Association, that we would direct the attention of component county societies. Before it is too late, and wherever a component county medical society exists, each such organization should appoint a Committee on History, to gather together the old record books, to secure biographical and other information, not only of former members, but of public health and similar activities in their respective communities. For better preservation, the old record books might well be sent to the central office of the California Medical Association for safe-keeping. Biographical and other sketches

* See pages 1 and 60 of the January issue.

may be forwarded to CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, for future appearance in its pages, or placement in the archives of the California Medical Association, for use when the needed history of our Association is compiled.

CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, therefore, expresses the hope that in every county society there will be one or more members sufficiently interested in the collection of historical memorabilia to lead them to present a resolution at an early meeting that would bring into being the appointment of a Committee on History, to take up this interesting and much needed work.

**A. M. A. SESSION IN SAN FRANCISCO,
JUNE 13-17; C. M. A. SESSION IN
PASADENA, MAY 9-12, 1938**

American Medical Association Session, June 13-17.—Once again, the California Medical Association will play host when, on Monday, June 13, the American Medical Association will open another five days' session, constituting its eighty-eighth annual convocation. On page 127 of this issue, in the Association news department, is given the list of local committees appointed by Dr. Howard Morrow, president of the California Medical Association and chairman, as delegated, of the Local Committee of Arrangements.

The city of San Francisco, in its handsome civic center buildings, possesses exceptionally good facilities for general and scientific section meetings, and for commercial exhibits. This year's program of papers is yet to be published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, but it may be taken for granted that they will measure up to the highest standards of previous years.

It is unfortunate (to make a contrast) that Los Angeles, through lack of adequate accommodations, is handicapped in so far as conventions of organizations such as the American Medical Association are concerned; for, as a matter of fact, the auditorium and other meeting place facilities of that large city are today really less serviceable and satisfactory than they were in 1911, when the American Medical Association held a session for the first and only time in Los Angeles.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that members of the California Medical Association will make note of the dates for the meeting of the American Medical Association in San Francisco, these being printed on the front cover of each issue of the OFFICIAL JOURNAL, and that a large number of physicians will avail themselves of this rare opportunity to attend, breathe the spirit of an annual session of the great national organization, and by their presence at the scientific and other gatherings partake of the stimulating, intellectual profit that is surely one of the rewards of attendance. A word, also, in regard to hotel accommodations: Members who are looking forward to attend *should request their reservations now.*

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California Medical Association Session, May 9-12.—This year's annual session of the California Medical Association preceding that of the

American Medical Association by about one month, will be held at the Hotel Huntington, Pasadena, commencing on Monday, May 9, and continuing for four days. The formal program will be given in a supplement to the April issue of CALIFORNIA AND WESTERN MEDICINE, and, in due time, complete information concerning the scientific and other programs will appear in the OFFICIAL JOURNAL. This famous hostelry has been the scene of former sessions, most pleasantly remembered, because of conveniences made possible by the size of that hotel, and there, also, a large attendance is awaited. Requests for room reservations may be sent to the Hotel Huntington, and should be made without delay.

**CALIFORNIA ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S
RULING ON PUBLICATION OF CALI-
FORNIA MEDICAL-ECONOMIC
SURVEY REPORT**

For the information of members of the California Medical Association to whom the matter may be of interest, the following item from the *Oakland Tribune* of January 13, 1938, is given space:

STATE MEDICAL SURVEY OPEN TO ALL, SAYS WEBB
*Private Individuals May Print and Circulate
Data, Attorney-General Holds*

"Private individuals may print and circulate complete details of the \$100,000 California medical-economic survey. . . .

"The way for this action was paved today by Attorney-General U. S. Webb in an informal opinion given in reply to a query from Assemblyman John Gee Clark of Los Angeles. . . .

"Webb said that there appeared to be 'no objection to printing any of the matters contained in the report, provided no incorrect statements were made in connection with the publication.'

"The accuracy proviso, he declared, would require any private publisher to designate those sections disapproved by the State Board of Health, to which the final report was submitted.

"Despite outside contributions, Webb ruled, the complete report remains the property of the State, and discretion as to what shall be contained in the official report published by the Board of Health remains with the Board of Health.

"This contention was borne out, Webb said, by a communication from Corrington Gill, Assistant WPA advisor at Washington, D. C., to James B. Sharp, coordinator of statistical projects for the WPA, in which it was pointed out that any individual might avail himself of the data."

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To the informal opinion of Attorney-General Webb of California, noted above, may be added the following clarifying statement from the Federal authorities:

(COPY)

OCSP-1-11
San Francisco,
January 3, 1938.

Professor Paul A. Dodd,
Department of Economics,
University of California at
Los Angeles, California.

Re: Publication of Medical-Economic Report

Dear Doctor Dodd:

In reply to your request of December 9 relative to publication of the Medical-Economic Report, we are pleased to